

The surgeon left the room. Just as he reached the side of Colonel Bayard, a terrific explosion followed. The cry of white and savage enemies combined—was heard without. A heavy volley of shot followed. A tramping of feet was heard overhead and below, as every man rushed to his post.

"The work has commenced," said the two men simultaneously.

CHAPTER VII. A STORY OF MURDER.

By open and bold assault, the assailants of the Hall, could hardly hope to gain possession of it. They knew how desperate the resistance would be, and with what an advantage on the side of the garrison. Therefore, though they fired volley after volley at the doors and windows, they did not supplement those demonstrations with attempts to enter.

The most effective means which could be employed in its reduction was fire, the drawback to that plan being nothing more than the difficulty of communicating the flames from the out-buildings, when they should be fired, to the main structure. But the inmates of the Hall knew that some way might be devised to accomplish this, and they kept vigilant watch to detect the first movements of their enemies in the horrible work.

The night was, unfortunately, cloudy, thus giving the besiegers a better opportunity to conceal their doings.

"We can certainly maintain ourselves here for the night," said Captain Hale. "The only question is at what cost of life, for if a hot fire is once kindled near to us, though it can be extinguished, some of us must perish in the work."

Water could be obtained from a well that had been dug in a corner of the great cellar, so no apprehension was felt on that account. Buckets, pots and pans filled with the valued element were placed in every story, and by nearly every window, ready for instant use.

The perilous work of applying it was entrusted specially to men who volunteered for the service.

After considerable firing by the besiegers, to which only limited reply was made by our friends, their shots and cries suddenly ceased.

The silence was ominous of quiet but not less hostile work.

"Keep your eyes strained, boys, in every quarter," enjoined their commander. "The rebels are not idle, you may guess. They are contriving how to burn us out."

From the windows anxious eyes peered painfully through the gloom, endeavoring to discover the exact operations of their foes.

For a period of half an hour this state of suspense continued, until it grew to be more trying than actual action.

At length one of the rangers—a little, thin, red-headed, sharp-eyed fellow—approached Captain Hale, with an eager, excited air, saying:

"This way, captain, if you please. I've made a discovery."

Moving quickly to the window from which the man had been making his observations, under the direction of his subordinate, Captain Hale looked searchingly out.

"Do you see anything there in the shadows?" asked the ranger.

Making no immediate reply, the commander continued to search the darkness with his eyes.

"Nothing," at length, he answered, "unless just beyond the main gate."

"That's the quarter!" interrupted the ranger, as if now sure that he had not previously been mistaken.

"I guess just beyond the main gate, or the main entrance rather, for I swear the gate is gone."

"You're right, captain."

"There's a shadowy something," resumed the other, speaking in a low, excited tone, "which wasn't there when twilight left us."

"And that something is nearer now than when I first saw it."

"Ah! and moving toward us still?"

"Exactly, captain."

"Call Thompson and Barrett—yonder!"

The commander pointed toward two rifle-men who stood near. At the intimation of their comrades they quickly came closer.

"Ready with your rifles, men," ordered the captain. "Aim just within the gateway, as our mark is now; you can all see something to shoot at there. Now!"

The simultaneous report of six rifles startled the other inmates of the Hall. A wild cry of rage and pain was heard without, still further adding to the alarm.

Without a word of explanation to those who came rushing excitedly to the room, the six men rapidly re-loaded their weapons to fire again. But at this moment a terrific discharge of bullets crashed through the window, and wild whoops and yells rang out. The volley was not harmless. Thompson fell dead, and two others who had entered were wounded. This was the first time the little garrison had sustained, and the death of their comrades impressed them more terribly with a sense of the peril which must still be met.

Leaving others to remove the fallen men, Captain Hale and the surviving four gave their eager attention to matters outside, for a critical moment of the defense had arrived.

The mysterious man or pile which had been discovered by the ranger—the meaning of which, however, was well understood by him and his companions who had seen it—still moved forward, without any visible propelling agency, and was steadily nearing the main door of the Hall. The volley that had been fired into it had only momentarily checked its approach.

It was a tall, bushy pile, pyramidal in form, broad enough at its base to hide if not protect the parties who were propelling it, and composed of a soft light foundation, made of rails and tight trunks, with a superstructure of dried brush and boughs, skillfully interlaced and of a very combustible nature. The evident design of the impatient enemy was to place this ingenious contrived appliance of destruction close to the door of the Hall, and then to ignite it.

The danger was great and imminent, for if the flames were once started, though water could be thrown upon them from the windows above, the work would certainly end the lives of some of the garrison. The besiegers would concentrate their fire at that point, and it would be death to appear at the windows.

A second discharge of bullets into the threatening mass was made by Captain Hale and those immediately with him, but to their dismay it still approached, and in another moment was out of range of their rifles—or rather it was too far within range, for they could reach it only by an exposure of their persons that would be madness. As it was, the gallant captain fell back, struck by a bullet, bleeding and senseless.

"He is killed!" cried several voices, in horror.

But in a brief period the wounded man, to the joy of his comrades, was on his feet again.

"Take my place," he said to Bates. "I am hurt, but not dead yet. I must see the outcome, though, that's certain."

He reeled, and would have again fallen had not one of his companions caught him and supported him.

"Watch for the first gleam of fire," he

called out, feebly but heroically, as he was led from the room. "Be ready with the water, use it even before the flames are started."

The disabling of their leader and the momentary confusion that ensued, caused momentary consternation to prevail. First a hoarse voice cried, "We'll fight to the last!" and the moment of panic passed.

The return of Captain Hale shortly after, faint and suffering as he was, diffused fresh spirit among the men. His very presence was inspiration.

The order to wet the dangerous pile below, as soon as it could be reached, so as to make it difficult of ignition, had not been lost upon his men. The window had been opened, and though ball after ball came hurtling in, and sometimes a whole volley, striking against shells and ceiling with terrific thud, there were those present brave enough to man the perilous work now necessary.

The first pail of water was thrown by Bates. Catching up the vessel containing the fluid, he reached daringly out of that gloomy portal of death, and dashed it upon the mass that loomed in the doorway. It was a fearful venture, but the gallant ranger escaped with nothing more serious than a bullet through his hair.

"Hurrah!" shouted his exultant and admiring comrades. "That was well done! Honor to Bates!"

There were more wanted. Who next tried it? "I'll do it," said the noble fellow. "I'm ready to go again myself."

"No!" cried another heroic voice. "Here!" And its owner presented himself, bucket in hand—the forlornest forlorn hope that ever defied death; the forlornest we say, since the bullets from the foe now entered the apartment thicker than ever. A moment only the hero hesitated—hesitated, not through fear, but for a full in the dreadful storm.

It came. Bleaching out as his predecessor had done, he threw the extinguishing fluid upon the now lighted pile; for despite the attempt to prevent its ignition, the formidable mass had been fired.

Bates paid for his heroic act with his life, falling out backward into the room, but outward and downward into the hands of the cruel foe.

An awful, horror-filled cry, burst from the lips of those who knew that he had thus perished. An answering, exulting shout was heard without.

But though he died, the gallant ranger gave not his life in vain. The fire that had already begun to crackle ominously, was doused if not extinguished, only a faint smoke remaining. This would probably not of itself break out into a dangerous fire, for the bushy pile had now been pretty thoroughly damped. Therefore, though deeply grieving for their comrade's loss, the survivors felt encouraged, even triumphant.

"How goes the defense in this quarter?" asked a voice at the door at this juncture, which every one recognized as Colonel Bayard's.

"Very good!" responded Captain Hale. "We have just lost Bates, however," he added sadly.

"That is bad. Is he quite dead?"

"Yes, and scalped by this time."

"Scalped!" echoed the veteran in amazement.

"He fell from the window as he was throwing water upon the flames," explained one.

"Merciful Heaven!" was the horrified ejaculation of the old soldier. "A man as brave as he deserved a better fate than that."

"He died doing his duty, Colonel."

"Yes, yes; none ever did it more gallantly, but it seems hard to lose him thus."

"How does Miss Seymour endure the statement of the siege?" asked Captain Hale, and all present listened anxiously for the answer.

"Very well, I may say. Such as she is worth defending, men."

A cheer well expressed the general agreement with the colonel's sentiment.

"I must return to her and Mrs. Livingston to report progress, and then to my post," said the old officer, as he left the room.

Notwithstanding his age and infirmities, he had insisted upon sharing the dangers of the defense, as he had declared he would, and had only temporarily relieved himself from duty to ascertain the general situation of affairs in order to acquaint the two ladies with it afterward.

The vigilance of those of the garrison present had not been for an instant relaxed during his call, though no more water had been thrown—it not being thought necessary to continue that perilous work immediately.

It was hoped that their discomfiture would discourage the besiegers from further attempts to fire the Hall; but no such certainty was indulged in on that score.

Again a silence fell upon the gloomy scene. Whoop of Indian and yell of tory no longer made hideous the outside night. Even the sharp rifle-shots that had punctuated the discordance ceased.

"More mischief is the meaning of that," remarked one.

"It takes silence to hatch a plot, and a devilish plan as well," said Captain Hale.

"Something original in the way of vengeance may soon be looked for. Our enemies have abandoned their first plan, I think. It has cost them some lives, and in view of the fact that they are superior to the regulars—they are sure to get us if they will only wait a little, they don't feel like paying too big a price for us. They're fearfully exasperated by our resistance though, and if they were to reach us now, man, woman and child would perish. That thought doesn't make you feel much like giving up yet, does it, men?"

A variety of muttered expressions of determination, mingled with exclamations, was the response to this.

"What is the meaning of this lull?" shortly repeated the captain, increasingly uneasy under the suspense of waiting.

As if in very answer to his words, a sharp flying gleam of fire shot athwart the open, avoided window, momentarily lighting up the apartment.

"Alas!" exclaimed the commander as if he instantly comprehended its meaning. Other expressions indicating a like understanding were heard from some of the rest.

"Burning arrows, is it? Quick, some of you to the roof!" A rush of footsteps followed.

"Spread the information, but keep every window guarded still," ordered Captain Hale to the few who remained. "Do you watch here, Wharton and I too will go."

He went from the room on a rapid tour of inspection and warning through the Hall, knowing that his immediate presence was not necessary in the garret.

Those who had hastened there, heard "tack" after "tack" of the fiery fall of arrows on the roof, and watched breathlessly to see if any of the blazing missiles communicated fire to the dry covering.

This was a mode of attack that the commander of the garrison had quite overlooked when he expressed his belief in their ability to hold out for the night.

Unfortunately the roof was very dry, and if the flames were communicated simultaneously at several points, the utmost exertions to extinguish them might prove unavailing.

From the windows below, the curving, meteor-like flight of the burning arrows

was to be witnessed, filling the hearts of the besiegers with new terror.

Water in quantities was carried to the upper portion of the Hall, even the women—such as were not incapacitated by fear—assisting in the labor.

With what a terrible anxiety those in the great gloomy garret watched for the entering points of flame!

They had barricaded the small windows at each end, to protect themselves from the bullets which the besiegers, anticipating the presence of their opponents in that part of the house, now poured in that direction, and there in the darkness which they feared would too soon be changed to destroying light, they stood ready to fight this new peril.

"Hark!" cried one.

"The roof has caught! God help us!" ejaculated another.

The light crisp crackling of burning shingles, tinder-dry, was indeed to be heard.

"The flame is through here! Quick, with the water!"

"And yonder!"

"Heaven aid us! The roof will soon be ablaze!"

The visible points of fire were quickly blackened by applications of water, only to enter elsewhere however.

All worked heroically, but the white glow of despair began by the gaining light to show in their faces. The roar of the spreading flames was becoming appalling. Sparks and splinters began to drop from blazing rafters and cross-lathes, falling among rubbish almost as combustible as the roof itself.

"We are lost!" was the despairing cry of more than one, though all still struggled manfully.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Terrible Alternative.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

I.

The waves swelled softly on the beach, through the pure, clear air above Vesuvius, veiled in graceful, floating clouds, bathed in sunlight. From a tiny boat on the glassy waters of the bay, came the sound of the fisherman's lily, and over every object hung a nightingale, the climate of Italy seemed to be in a day in spring.

On a cliff overlooking the azure sea, with orange-trees shaking their blossomy white fingers over her head, and filling the air with perfume, reclined Grace Lindsay. Her glance wandered from point to point in the distance, where each new delight, not hastily, but with a dreamy expression on her face that told of rapturous content.

Grace Lindsay's face was not remarkable for beauty. It was a pale, quiet face, with just a hint of blue-rose color in the cheeks, but its luminous blue eyes, dark and light according to the varying emotions of their owner, redeemed it from the reproach of plainness or prettiness; the latter usually meaning color and insipidity.

An unopened book lay near her, and a sheet of music from which she had been practicing an aria, had fallen from her hand. Working round in the neighboring thicket had taken up the trail that she had forgotten, and was now making the air quiver with melody.

But Grace's serene enjoyment was destined to be rudely disturbed. She heard an exclamation, and the sound of scrabbling. Working round in the neighboring thicket had taken up the trail that she had forgotten, and was now making the air quiver with melody.

"He died doing his duty, Colonel."

"Yes, yes; none ever did it more gallantly, but it seems hard to lose him thus."

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KATY DID.

Katy did—what did Katy do?
 She blazed me a line that thrilled me through—
 On the stars at night—
 The stars that winked and blinked at the night;
 Of the summer hours,
 And the perfume of the lovely flowers,
 And then she hid
 Her eye beneath the veil of its fringed lid.
 She did, she did,
 Katy did.

Katy did—and what did she do?
 She loved me a love, and she kept it too;
 She said for life
 She would be my wife.
 That never between us should come any strife;
 That for wealth or war,
 To the priest she would go,
 And on me her love and faith would bestow—
 Katy did,
 And then she hid
 Her eye beneath the veil of its fringed lid.
 She did, she did,
 Katy did.

Katy did—what more did she do?
 She brought a love to my wondering view—
 A lovely girl
 With the merry curl,
 And a heart as pure as the purest pearl;
 And the little maid,
 With her curls and kinks,
 Is the merriest maid in the world methinks.
 Katy did,
 Her eye half hid,
 Peeped forth from the veil of its fringed lid;
 She did, she did,
 Katy did.

Katy did—what more could she do?
 She gave me (you'll tell me) a love true;
 A bounding boy,
 To be my joy,
 To be my mate and my heart's employ;
 And the little rogue
 Is back in vogue,
 About our house, with his laughing tongue,
 I couldn't forbid.
 What Katy did
 As her eye peeped forth from the fringe of its lid—
 What Katy did
 I couldn't forbid.

Katy did—well, what more did she do?
 Why, whenever my spirit became very blue,
 She'd come to me,
 My sorrow to see,
 And she'd kiss away my misery.
 Ah, the merry maid,
 It would be a great shame
 If in word or thought I could Katy blame.
 Katy did,
 Her eye half hid,
 Is peeping now through the fringe of its lid.
 Katy did,
 Sweet Katy did.

Ever My Queen.

BY PIERCE EGAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE FLOWER OF THE FLOCK,"
 "VIOLET," OR, "THE WONDER OF KINGS,"
 "WOOD CHASE," "MARA JARRETT'S
 DAUGHTER," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUEEN OF THE WORKROOM.

Within the last ten or fifteen years there have been raised in the city of London vast structures, less remarkable as examples of what may be termed the architecture of commerce, magnificent as they are, than for being the swarming hives of many manufacturing industries. Instead of, as in the old days, dividing the production of various goods for home or foreign consumption among many manufacturers residing in several parts of London or the country, the work has been brought under one roof, and the numerous handicrafts are ranged in different departments. The operations are conducted on a gigantic scale, and the members of the different firms are those gentlemen who now are classed as "merchant princes."

In one of these huge fabrics, situated very much within the sound of Bow Bells, doing an enormous home and shipping trade, was a department, occupying several floors, devoted to work produced by sewing machines. Each floor had its speciality, and it seemed that nothing the human hand could manufacture with a needle was beyond the scope of these wonderful little inventions, which not only performed the labor with extraordinary quickness, but with a beauty and precision beyond the power of the hand—the marvellously delicate hand—of woman to rival.

This fact was instanced in one of the rooms in which the most skillful of the skilled work-girls were employed. In this department the most delicate needlework, including the very finest examples of embroidery, apparently beyond the possible reach of a machine to execute, were turned out actually as if "human hands had never touched them." Even here, where every article to the eye was equally as beautifully manipulated—if we may, by stretching a point, use the word—there were degrees of excellence in the manipulations. Of these there was one young girl the acknowledged superior of all.

That is to say, the forewoman acknowledged her to have personal qualifications, because he was in the habit of assuring himself morn, noon and night, on his way from it, and while disporting his weary and thin limbs in his "chambers in Weymouth-street, W." that—

"She was the loveliest girl he had ever dreamt of—a perfect bore."

This opinion, too, he confided, in those terms, to a bosom friend, who sometimes partook with him, in his "nooky," of some "cold gin" and the friendly calumet. There were between fifty and sixty other girls, all clever and industrious, in the same room—a long one with many windows—in this City Palace of Labor; but the majority of them did not think with the forewoman, so far as the superiority of the young lady's skill went; neither did they, in their hearts, believe that the young person who had jumped up, as it were, into the highest position in the room, deserved her elevation.

With regard to the superintendent's opinion, that "she was the loveliest girl in the three kingdoms," they joined issue. They set him down as a "ridiculous" fool on that point, and declared they could point out in the room three or four girls with countenances much more handsome and attractive than her sanctified doll's face.

Withal, she was generally liked for the sweetness of her manner, though spiteful remarks about her good looks were indulged in. Still there were a few who entertained the same opinion as the superintendent with respect to her beauty, and there was one who was already devotedly attached to her, and entertained for her an affectionate friendship far deeper, stronger and tenderer than she would perhaps have been her own sister.

Whatever might be the diversity of opinion among the girls respecting her personal attractions, there was no qualification of the fact that in lineaments, form, and mien, she was the Queen of Beauty in that room. She sat evidently in a place of honor, being the best position for light, the most commanding in its situation, and having allotted to it more space than was

accorded to any other young girl in the room. She was a little above the middle height, and her figure slim, apparently even fragile, was of delicate and graceful proportions. Her hair, plaited and arranged with exceeding taste, and the skill of an artist, was of that pale, delicate, shining brown so seldom seen on the human head, save among the high-born—the hue so unfittedly described by any named color, but yet always to be recognized in Antenna's fading leaves innumerable woodlands.

Her face, placid, passive, almost impassive, was a remarkable type of aristocratic beauty—that refinement of style which is tacitly acknowledged the moment it is observed as an evidence of pure blood. Her eyes were large, and of that deep violet-blue seen only on the blossoming leaf of the cultivated "hazels"; but from the tone of her mind, and the inward promptings of a spirit which she held in subjection by a superior intelligence, which served her as a faithful monitor, she kept them almost constantly downcast, and fully shrouded by her long, silken, curved, dark eyelashes.

When she did raise them, and then fasten them on some of the men, either curiously or wonderingly, their soft intensity supplied him with more than enough convulsive emotion for that day. "Angels, ever bright and fair," was his theme—if he knew the air—and he wandered into solitary places, full of longing and yearning and sick sighs for the greater portion of the evening week.

Seated next to this very attractive young workwoman was another, also an example of bright looks and attractive features. She, however, had none of the symbols of blue blood in her veins, but she had that which went a long way to compensate for it.

She had decided features, all good—straight nose, bright brown, laughing eyes, a pretty mouth, full lips, clear, healthy complexion, a sunny smile. She had also rather a profusion of dark brown hair, either naturally glossy, or it was carefully oiled and brushed so as to make it so, and like her companion's, was arranged with a neatness and skill which long practice in "doing her own hair" only could have given her.

It would have been a mistake, however, to suppose that because she had a joyous spirit she was giddy or frivolous. Already one or two adventurous youths, who, under that impression, had sought to make too free with her lips uninvited, had been enlightened by her on the point by receiving from her hand the privilege of securing a stinging in the ears, which remained their own for a week or ten days.

There was a directness in her look, a self-reliance set upon her mouth when at rest, and a firmness in her carriage and step, which made any person to whom she said significantly, "I stand no nonsense" readily believe her.

She was apparently very intent on her work. One foot was seen-sawing with wondrous regularity and steadiness, and her machine was "whirring" at an almost incredible speed; but so was her tongue.

She had a good listener in her young assistant, who, she picked to pieces because it was dropping to bits, she chattered; "but it was strange that I should pop upon you and your mother looking for lodgings, after you had been abroad for years, wasn't it?"

"Very strange—and very fortunate," responded her companion, in a low tone. "Yes, it was lucky," proceeded the young girl; "I mean for me, for I was glad to see you again. I knew your mother—leastways, Mrs. Sydney."

"Smith," interposed her companion, with a slight flutter of the eyelids. "For once," rejoined the girl, with a curl of the lip. "I knew you as Lydia Sydney—'Handsome Lyd Sydney,' as poor father used to call you—and I liked you. I was fond of you, Lydia—precious fond of you—so I am now—but—but—oh, I was fond of you then, and you were such a dear, dear thing—you'd give me anything you had—and you used to have a good many tartar tarts—raspberry jam—they were beautiful!" and she smacked her lips at the bare recollection.

"I shall never forget how I cried when you went away—nobody knew how or why. You went to America, didn't you?"

"Yes." "Ah! it's a fine place, isn't it? Thousands and thousands of miles long, I'm told."

"I did not see very much of it."

"Why were you in it five years, wasn't you?"

"Yes; but very soon after we landed in New York, mamma Smith met with a man she had known in England when they were young, she said. He was a dealer in horses, a low, rough person whom I could not appreciate at all, though mamma tried very hard, by threats and angry reproaches, to make me like him. He, however, liked me exceedingly—it seemed so strange to me—and she married him."

"Married him!" echoed her companion, with a start, at the same time breaking a thread, which necessitated the stopping and adjustment of her machine, but not the stopping of her tongue. "Why she was married already," she pursued, as she proceeded her task of threading the needle again; "married to tipsy old Sydney."

"Yes," returned her companion, hesitatingly; "but she received intelligence from England very soon after we arrived in America that Paps Sydney had died in a drun—in a fit."

The girl uttered a derisive laugh. "That won't wash, Lydia—not with Lollie Leslie," she replied, pausing and looking up. "I never forget faces. I remembered yours the moment I set eyes on it, didn't I? Well, if ever I saw anybody I've seen before in my born days, I saw old Sydney the other day, shuffling along Cheap-side with a face red and pimpled like the shell of a crawfish. He didn't see me—he was grinning and mumbling as if he had just heard a good joke. I knew him directly I clapped eyes on him, though it is years ago since I saw him brought home on a stretcher to our house in mistake."

A cloud passed over the fair young face beside her, and the small lips moved murmuringly.

"It can't be possible! Mamma could not have been so wicked!"

"Couldn't she?" returned her companion, with a toss of the head, as she caught the scarcely audible words. "Ah, I've heard mother say she was sure Mrs. Sydney had something on her mind—some great crime—which would come out one day; and she always said she was sure you were not her."

"Hush there, young ladies—hush! hush—silence!" suddenly interrupted the forewoman, in a shrill treble, hurrying with upraised hands down the narrow channel in the centre of the room. "Stop working—stop your machines! Mr. Fissell wants to say something to you."

The rapid, sharp, clicking whirr from the machines ceased instantly, and a sudden and almost oppressive silence obtained, save that it was faintly broken by some low, tering, whispering, irrelevant mutterings respecting "Old Fizzle," as the superintendent was nicknamed by the girls, and



THE WRECK OF THE ATLANTIC.

(See First Page.)

wondering what he could want to say to all of them at one time.

They were not permitted more than a minute to air their speculations when Mr. Fissell entered the room, accompanied by a young gentleman, taller, slimmer, and more stately than the superintendent, but without any of his inflated manner.

Immediately Lollie Leslie caught sight of the young gentleman, she bent over to her beautiful young companion, and whispered, "Oh, Lydia—I say, Lydia, here is the new partner in the firm coming in with old Fizz. He is the son of a Scotch high and mighty nobleman—a real duke. You have heard of him—haven't you?"

"No," returned Lydia, faintly, as she raised her eyes and directed them at the new member of the firm, who was slowly advancing up the room, and glancing beneath his eyelids rather than gazing directly at the many feminine countenances turned directly toward him.

"Oh, yes," continued Lollie, in her swift undertone, "he's a real, regular, right-down duke, or something of that sort. He's got a brother a marquis, another a soldier—a general or a officer—one a bishop, and this one's to be in a trade. I heard old Fizzle telling Mother Game-eyes all about it the other day."

"Will you keep your tongue still, Miss Leslie?" interposed, with a frowning aspect, Miss Gamoy, the forewoman, who was nicknamed by the "young ladies" "Game-eyes," as much for a slight cast she had in her left eye as that it was a vulgar play upon her surname. "You are always chattering, chattering."

Miss Lollie Leslie screwed up her nose, and protruded her tongue slightly between her teeth in reply, only she bent her head down so that the gesture was not seen by the forewoman, but she became silent.

Mr. Fissell advanced up the room with a mincing smile on his features, and his eyes fixed on the beautiful face of Miss Smith, the name by which she was known there. By his springy step and exceedingly graceful deportment it was instantly conjectured by the quick brains of the girls that some further mark of favor and honor was about to be bestowed upon the young lady who had already occupied the principal position among the workers—not only as an acknowledgment of superior skill, but by a general recognition of her personal qualifications for the post of honor.

And they were not mistaken. Mr. Fissell drew himself up before Miss Lydia Smith. He set his chin rather high in the air, and expanding as much as he could manage of his chest, adorned with a large patch of blazing blue satin—the lower part of his necktie—he exclaimed, in a creamy voice:

"Miss Smith and young ladies, I have the greatest gratification in introducing to your favorable notice the new and the youngest member of our firm—Mr. Athol."

A buzz ran among the young girls like the murmur of a rising wind—a battery of one hundred eyes, at least, played instantly on the face of Mr. Athol. Mr. Fissell, however, threw up his hands again for silence, and elevated his voice. He let fall his eyelids, smiled benignly, and inserted his thumbs in the armbolts of his yellow-drab double-breasted waistcoat.

A moment, if you please, ladies," he continued; "Mr. Athol has a most gratifying announcement to make to you all, and I really must beg you to be as silent as you can while he is addressing you."

Mr. Athol, who had but just attained his twenty-first year, displayed a modest, easy dignity of deportment, though while Mr. Fissell was speaking he did not venture to look around him. The girls, therefore, were enabled to examine, scrutinize, and criticize his features, and to prepare themselves to offer an opinion on his merits at the very earliest opportunity afforded them.

They noted that he had a fair complexion, slightly tanned, as if he had been abroad, or had enjoyed the pleasures of yachting rather continuously. They observed and approved his upright, well-shaped form, his blue eyes, and the rather intense expression doing their share in the Paris Exhibition. Their hands were waved in the air, excepting where it was secretly known they were little too dingy to be flourished, and some were recklessly thrown impulsively clapped their hands with enthusiastic delight.

There was more yet to come. "Old Fizzle and Game-eyes," as the superintendent and forewoman were disrespectfully termed, had hard work to restrain the buoyancy of the excited girls, but something like quietude, doing their share in the Paris Exhibition. Their hands were waved in the air, excepting where it was secretly known they were little too dingy to be flourished, and some were recklessly thrown impulsively clapped their hands with enthusiastic delight.

"The firm of which I have the honor to be a junior member," he said, with a feeling of excitement quite new to him, "feel it their duty to make their grateful acknowledgments to you young ladies for this successful result of your labors, and I have the pleasure to inform you that you will each, at the end of the week, receive an appreciable gratuity in money."

The cries, the clatter, the shrill exclamations, cheers, clapping of hands, and involuntary salutatory movements that followed that announcement, proved what a boon a gift in money was regarded by those poor hard-working young girls.

Mr. Athol, with features a little more flushed than before, and speaking as though he had some little difficulty in breathing freely, went on:

"Of course, you admit that it is right to pay honor where honor is due, for you have all won a proud honor, and it will be paid to you."

"Certainly, sir!" "Of course!" and many other such observations were the responsive appendices to this proposition.

"Therefore," he continued, speaking more slowly, and with more deliberation, "you will also be readily prepared to accord honor where it is due."

A prompt assent to this was returned by many voices.

"One young lady in this room has designed nearly if not all the embroidery patterns which were sent for exhibition to Paris," he pursued.

"Lydia Smith!" cried out Lollie Leslie, half hysterically.

"Smith! Smith! Smith!" echoed a dozen voices.

Poor Lydia Smith, with face, forehead, and neck a rose-crimson, bent down her head as though she had been guilty of something shameful, especially as she felt Lollie's hand pressed affectionately upon her shoulder, and perceived twenty white fingers pointing to her.

Mr. Athol observed her, and his cheeks glowed, too, while his eyes became almost superhumanly brilliant. He gazed almost

fastly at her for a moment, and, advancing to her, gently took her hand in his.

She involuntarily raised her face, and he as involuntarily murmured an exclamation, although it was inaudible. Then, hastily clearing his throat, he said—

"Permit me, Miss Smith, to congratulate you upon the successful result of your labors. The extreme beauty of your designs has been, if possible, more than equalled by the extraordinary precision, delicacy, and wonderful skill with which you have reproduced them on fabrics of the rarest manufacture and fineness—so I am informed, for, as yet, I am no adept in these matters—and, therefore, it is mainly to your superior intelligence, and to the remarkable perfection to which you have brought the powers of that wonderful machine over which you are the presiding deity, that the firm are indebted for the honor of the prize medal. In their name, I am requested to beg your acceptance of this purse as a token of their recognition of your merits."

Again there were shrill, high-toned cheers and waving of handkerchiefs, for the great accomplishments possessed by Lydia Smith in that department were beyond a question of opinion.

"Let us make her Queen of the Workroom," shrieked Lollie Leslie, shrilly, at the top of her voice, addressing the girls, with vehement gesticulation.

The idea was a novel one, but it was caught up instantly, and echoed with remarkable enthusiasm, and one of the loudest voices among those who cheered was that of Mr. Athol.

"I came prepared for that expression of your good feelings, young ladies," he cried, elevating his voice in order to secure a chance of being heard. "Miss Gamoy, be good enough to hand me that box," he added, and several young voices from individuals indignantly screened by companions, exclaimed—

"Now then, Game-eyes, look sharp: trot it out, old sort!"

Miss Gamoy fancied she recognized those voices, and promised herself to prove it to the owners to some purpose one day, though not now. With affected quickness and emotion, she produced a circular cardboard box with gilt edges from under her arm, and, removing the lid, Mr. Athol snatched from it—strangely enough, with trembling fingers—an artificial wreath of laurels, beautifully made. This, without an instant's delay, he gracefully placed upon the brow of the shrinking, trembling, half-fainting Lydia, whose face had become a snow-white, and he led off in a stentorian voice a round of cheers, which made the rafters ring again.

In this he was supported with a kind of abandoned delirium by Mr. Fissell, who stared with staring eyes at the crowned deity, and made his throat so sore by screaming that for the next week he was compelled to go through a severe course of gargle.

The girls, too, entered into the idea with frenzied enthusiasm. They never remembered to have had their skill and devotion to their daily work so recognized and so honored before, and they seemed insane with delight. There was at the end of the room a tall, high-backed, wooden chair for the use of the forewoman, when tired with moving to and fro. It gave her an elevated position when seated, and enabled her to overlook her little flock. This chair was seized by half a dozen active girls, was brought to the spot where the fair Lydia, quite overpowered, was standing, and because she had a chance of resting, she was lifted in it amid cries, laughter, and tears.

Then Lollie Leslie, clapping her hands and elevating her voice, screamed and sobbed—

"Three cheers for the Queen of the Workroom!" shrieked every girl present.

And now," added Mr. Athol, with his most cheery smile and his sprightliest bearing, "as we have got so far over the gratifying communication it has been my agreeable privilege to make to you, there is one other I have to deliver, which I am sure you will not consider much less pleasing."

You know that we are full of orders, and we have but little time to spare even for as just and proper a demonstration as the present; but the firm have, after consultation, arrived at the decision that, as a token of their appreciation of the past, and as an incitement to even excel your present performance in the future, to give you a whole day's pleasant enjoyment. They purpose chartering a steamer, which shall convey you all down the river Thames, and they will provide such entertainments and refreshments as will enable you to spend a very happy day. Due notice will be given to you at the appointed time, and you may be sure that it will be selected when the weather is at its brightest and the days are the longest."

The tumult which ensued was a sight to see, and defies description. Spontaneous requests from some of the unabashed young ladies for Mr. Athol to make one of the party even arose from several parts of the small crowd; but, without replying to them, he bowed courteously, and escaped from the room.

But not until he had gently pressed the fingers of the Queen of the Workroom, and received the gratification of meeting her upturned eyes, and reading in them her thankful appreciation of the honors he had assisted to pay her, and the respect which had accompanied it.

He felt thrilled, restless, feverish, as he hurried away, and she became oppressed with a strange sense of isolation she would have given worlds to have been able to sit in tears; and, indeed, it was with great difficulty she controlled them, especially when Lollie Leslie hugged her and kissed her like a wild creature, and some of the girls, pressing round her with their grateful, warm kisses.

That work must not stand still even for such pleasant passages as this in the monotony of daily toil, and Miss Gamoy, assisted by Mr. Fissell, harked the young ladies back to their places at their respective machines again, so that, in a comparatively brief space, the whirring of the instruments was going on as usual.

The Queen of the Workroom, however, although against her inclinations, by unanimous desire—nay, almost command—wore her wreath of laurels for that day, at least.

At dinner-time, however, tongues as well as teeth were permitted full play, and an excursion by the steambath to the Thames of hysteric discussion. The most extravagant notions were submitted for approval, and the most extravagant forecasts made. Almost every girl had a different notion as to the form the pleasure of the "good time" should take; but there seemed to be a common union of sentiment with reference to the imperative necessity of the presence of a military (German) band, of much dancing, and plenty of refreshments.

It seemed also to be a belief ridiculous to doubt, that a band of "nice fellows" from the city, and musical and social elements would be provided for the occasion as partners in the dances, and companions for the rest of the day, perhaps for life—what could tell?

Lydia, the Queen of the Workroom, was, perhaps, the only one silent—the only one who could not efface from her vision those brilliant yet soft blue eyes—she could not remove from her hearing the mellow harmony of that melodious voice—nor could she, if she had wished, and she did not—dispel the sensation which had thrilled her from the tips of her fingers to her heart when he had touched her hand.

Poor Lollie Leslie, in her efforts to brighten her spirit and make them buoyant—for she saw the cloud on her brow—contrived, unfortunately, to make her more depressed. At last, a sentence she uttered burst forth distressed from the poor young queen's ears, and made her see the fearful chasm which yawned beneath her and her secret aspirations.

"Oh, Lydia—oh, Lydia!" she cried, enthusiastically, "isn't this awfully jolly? It's a luncheon of delight all once! You are made Queen of it for the rest of the week, golden sovereigns—which you deserve, my dear, if a prince ever did—and we are all to have a raise in our screws at the end of the week, and a right-down splendid day out in the bargain! Oh, my, Lydia, it is almost too much for our brains to think of all at once! Heigho! What a darling cloud of a fellow Mr. Athol is—isn't he? He is a real lord, you know, and no mistake. Won't I make myself amiable to him on the day out—for he will be sure to come—that's all! Won't I be dressed all in my best, too? I'll think I'll think I'll think of it all at once! Heigho! What a darling cloud of a fellow Mr. Athol is—isn't he? He is a real lord, you know, and no mistake. Won't I make myself amiable to him on the day out—for he will be sure to come—that's all! Won't I be dressed all in my best, too? 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Lollie nodded her head twice or three significantly, as if she were forming a resolution. Whatever it was, however, she kept it to herself for the moment. But it was not long before she referred to Mrs. Smith, alias May, alias Sydney—born Anne Marchmont.

"She gave a tragic wave of her right hand to the air, as if she had dismissed that subject for the present, and then she clasped the palm of her left hand with her right, and said, emphatically:

"You don't die of those two measly scraps of bread and salt, if I know it. I'll apply for a sausage to-day. Lollie Blomfield has only brought a thin rather either, and Janice Plimmer could only manage a savory loaf, as she only a penny left this morning, or else they'd shared with you the best they've got, I know; but I tell you what, Lolly dear, I've just been to the pan to get a place for my sausage, and there was a row going on between Betty Tudge and Lollie Brown. Pretty Lollie Brown has got a lovely chop—such a thick one—given her by a young cousin of hers, who is a butcher. She told me she made eyes at it on the board as she passed his shop coming to work this morning, and he said at once rolled it up in a cabbage leaf, and popped it into her hand. 'There you are, Lollie,' he said, 'think of me when you are grabbing off it.' She took it like a bird. That's something like a cousin, isn't it?"

The young queen's thoughts were busy in another direction, and she did not hear the remark. Without pausing, however, Lollie rattled on:

"Well, when I walked up to the pan, Lollie wanted to fry her chop, but Betty Tudge had got a strong blower, and wouldn't wait; so she would lay her fatty red herring close to Lollie's chop and my sausage, and she would come out of the pan, I advised Lollie to do the same, and so she did. Besides, there was a bit of strong haddock, two slices of calves' liver, a flosser, and a lot of other things cooking together, so we made up our minds to wait, and—Lollie what I know."

Without another word, she ran over to the fireplace devoted to the cooking of the various articles of food brought by the girls for their dinner, and, mingling with some of them who were waiting their turn to secure an eligible vacancy for the cooking of their provision in an enormous frying-pan, which contained even a greater medley than Lollie had enumerated—onions, potatoes and cabbage taking their respective allotments—she got up a conference.

The result was, after a brief delay, a nicely-cooked, "lovely thick chop, a present from a cousin," a few slices of fried potatoes, a penny twist, a fried knife and fork, a contribution of pepper and salt, all on a beautifully clean plate, and arranged in such a manner as almost to "wake an appetite beneath the ribs of death." At least those who saw it, and some who wound its fragrance as it was borne triumpantly past them, thought so as they looked their only half-satisfied lips.

Lollie, attended by a deputation of four young damsels who had contributed to this alternative fund, placed it abruptly before the fair Lydia, then sitting in a fit of deep abstraction, and retired as suddenly, saying:

"You are going to-day. You must have a royal repast."

Poor Lydia looked up at her retreating companions, and then at the tempting dish placed before her, her eyes filled with tears at the generous and unselfish thoughtfulness it evinced, even more than the compliment it conveyed.

She was very hungry, even to faintness, and she perceived that if she made any demerit she would have to combat a thousand protestations and urgings, and be compelled, after all, to pacify the kind donors by partaking of some, if ever so little. Therefore, for the moment—in fact, as a piece of policy, she stifled her sacred sense of humiliation, for in spite of common sense arguments, such was her feeling, and dined off the chop to the intense gratification of Lollie and the girls, who watched her from a distance with a growing conviction that with her good looks she was not so stuck up, after all.

When night came, Lollie, who was her daily companion, and from the place of business, for they resided within a few doors of each other, easily contrived to obtain from Lydia the purse with which she had been presented and permission to examine the contents.

She took it a little aside, and found with it ten new, bright golden sovereigns, and with remarkable quickness and dexterity she whipped five of them into her pocket, muttering to herself:

"She shall go to that trip down the river like a real beautiful lady, if I have to do something very, very desperate for it."

Then she handed back the purse—a lady's very handsome, elaborately worked, and beautifully made Russia leather portmanteau, and asked her if she had opened it. Lydia answered to the negative, and Lollie insisted upon her doing so before—as she knew she would—she handed it over with all it contained to the woman who claimed to be her mother.

Lollie saw the eyes of Lydia expand and brighten as they fastened on the glistening coin, and she said, quickly:

"You mean to keep that to buy some new things with, don't you, Lolly?"

Lydia shook her head.

"It is wasted at home," she replied, with a sigh.

Lollie made an angry gesture of dissent.

"How could it be wasted at home if it hadn't been given to you to-day?" she demanded, almost fiercely. "You didn't expect it—how can that old grab all expect it? You will tell me, will you?"

"Of course, Lollie dear," she answered, gravely, and obediently.

"I have no secrets from Mamma Smith. I am sure you have none from your mamma."

"My mother isn't a bit like Mamma Smith, as you call her," returned Lollie, with a cutting lip, "or else I pretty soon should have, I can tell you. You must have a brain new dress to go to my trip, and if you give up all this money how are you to get it? I should like to know."

"I do not mean to give you the day," murmured Lydia, in a more plaintive tone than she had intended. "I cannot go even decently dressed, and—I will not—not, I will not go poorly clad as I am."

"What the Queen of the Workroom away on that glorious day? Ha! ha! Lollie, with a gesture of supreme scorn. 'We shall see about that.'"

Before the work ceased for the day, Mr. Fawell re-appeared, and informed the young ladies that the firm had fixed the following Wednesday fortnight for the steambath trip, and that the time and place of assembling would be given to them on the day before.

We are bound for Gravesend, young ladies, pursued Mr. Fawell, with his thumb locked to the armholes of his vest. "There will be Rochester, you know, with all its enjoyments, and I see by the papers, that the Royal Thames Yacht Club have a grand sailing match on that day, so we shall have lots to see and gratify us."

"Rey-vo Faw!" exclaimed a voice from his rear.

He turned sharply round, but was unable to detect the disrespectful maiden. All the girls were uttering, but the disquieting was not observable.

He then moved to the Queen of the

Workroom, and observed, with fawning

patronage—

"I hope to be your mark on that day, fair majesty of sewing-machines. I shall be in attendance on you, and it will be my duty and pleasure—very much my pleasure—to see you every comfort."

"Mr. Fawell will do that," snapped Lollie, sharply and peremptorily.

"Hold your tongue, Miss Lollie, if you please. Hold your tongue until you are spoken to, Miss Fawell," he snarled.

And he frowned at her, too, as if he would reduce her proportions to those of a mouse.

Hastened again to Lydia, but she who looked grave, and was by no means fascinated by his suggestion. The girl, somehow, was rubbed off his gingerbread, and he felt it, so he retired with an unconscious air of discomfort, exclaiming—

"How mean, young ladies—be as you are!"

"Enough of you, old Faw, every day; don't want you on the steamer, old man!" cried the same irreverent scuffer, as he disappeared through the door.

A great deal of discussion of the intended trip went on in undertone after this among the girls, and what they would wear. "If they could get it," was animatedly suggested, but Lydia spoke very little upon any subject, and not at all on this, during the remainder of the day; rather strangely, Lollie preserved a strict silence too.

But only until she quitted the place of business with Lydia, and she took up the subject, and merged into extravagant eulogiums upon Mr. Athol, to which Lydia listened with a silent, slighting gratification—with an emotion too full for words.

As they hurried on, Lollie talking with the utmost volubility, Lydia felt herself suddenly confronted by a man, who uttered a cry of what sounded like a frightened remark.

He seized her tightly by the two shoulders, and placing his face near to hers, perused her lineaments with glaring eyes.

Then he abruptly released her, and hurried off with the utmost rapidity.

Lydia, who had recovered from her astonishment, said half-whispered—

"There, Lolly dear? Did you see him? Don't you know who he is?"

"No," replied Lydia, bewildered, for she fancied withal the face was familiar to her.

"Why, it was old Sydney himself. I'd swear to him out of a thousand!" cried Lollie, excitedly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Cost of Conquest.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MR. Saxon's Patient.

They say I'm mad—believe them not!

—Hagare, *l'opéra*.

Poor Edwards seemed dazed and blinded by the light when he entered Mr. Hastings' drawing room, and put up a hand covered with cuts and scratches to shade his weakened eyes. His clothes were torn, and his face was like his hands—scratched and bleeding. He looked feebly at Mrs. Hastings.

"They told me you lived here," he said, in a hollow voice, "and I thought you'd help me. I've got away."

He staggered through weakness or weariness, and Mr. Hastings gave him a glass of wine.

"Your name is Edwards," he said.

"Yes, sir, that's it. They've tried to make me believe I was mad, and that it was not my name, but it is. Miss Kate knows me."

"Of course I do, but I'm not Miss Kate now. I'm a gentleman and a man of business," Mr. Hastings said.

"Your husband, and not Mr. Philip?"

He looked puzzled, and she put her hand gently on his shoulder.

"You will understand all about it soon," she said. "Harry, he needs rest and refreshment now, and safety."

"He shall have all three, my dear. We will hear his story presently."

He rang the bell, and his own man appeared. He bade him take the stranger, and see him bathed, clothed and fed, but cautioned him not to talk to him, nor to allow any one else to approach him.

"Attend to him in my dressing room," he said. "When he is ready to see us, let us know. Have no fear, my man, he added, kindly, seeing the hunted look in Edwards' eyes, "you are quite safe with us."

In less than an hour, Mr. and Mrs. Hastings were surprised by the appearance of a neatly-dressed, intelligent-looking man, very pale, as if from privation or illness, but having no trace of insanity in his manner or appearance. They made him sit down, and gave orders they were not to be disturbed.

"Now tell your whole story from the beginning," Mrs. Hastings said.

"We have reason to suspect foul play of some sort from the very hour of Mr. Reynell's landing in Malta."

"So you think it is your old master who has returned to England?" Katherine asked.

"Sometimes I fancy it cannot be that Philip Reynell is changed, but that some one has stolen his place in the world, his patrimony, and his name."

"My dear Kate, what an idea!" said Mr. Hastings, and Edwards looked at her in surprise.

"It is my master who is at Boscobel, isn't he, said, quietly.

"Quite sure, I saw him."

"Then I got away from the first place I was put to, I made straight for Boscobel. They caught me there. But I'll tell the whole tale from the beginning, as you wish, sir."

They listened with breathless interest when he told them how he landed, full of hope, at Portsmouth, and made his way to Herefordshire, happy in the anticipation of a home with the master he so loved. He sent his luggage from the station, and waited.

"The scenery was so beautiful," he said. "I was so near my native county, I wanted to see all I could."

"But you never got to Boscobel," Mr. Hastings remarked.

"Yes I did, sir, and a lovely place it is. I walked right up through the park, and got to the front of the house. I looked about for a way to the back, but I couldn't see any, except a little gate leading to some ruins. I went in, and I stood looking about me, for it was very beautiful. There was a deep hole under an archway, looking like a well, and I stood by it a minute, wondering what it was, when all of a sudden, with a tremendous crash, I fell. Whether I was struck, or pushed, or grew giddy with looking down I don't know. I hardly knew anything after. It seemed to me I fell thousands of feet, and saw a million of stars when I struck the bottom. After that I saw nothing. I heard a dog whining and snoring, and then voices—a man and a woman. I knew the former, and then I knew no more until—"

"Until I woke to life once more in a lunatic asylum. They called me John Jones, and swore I was brought there by my sister, so they did at last place. I bore blows, starvation, and misery that will not bear description, for I knew there was either

fool play or a mistake somewhere, and I found my time to escape. It came, and I got to Boscobel, and hid in the ruins, for I was closely pursued. I saw my master face to face; but just as I was going to speak to him, he fell to the ground in a fit. I was outside at the noisy moment, and, too weak to resist, I was soon overpowered and taken back. The next day I was brought here."

"And you don't know at whose instigation?"

"No."

"You are sure it was your master you saw?"

"Quite sure."

"Whose voice was it you heard when you were down the hole?"

"It must have been a fancy. The man was dead—I saw him last in India."

"It is a curious story you have told us."

"It is true, sir—every word of it."

"I believe it; but have you no idea what sort of a person put you under restraint?"

"A tall, dark man came to the other asylum once, and I learned, from what the keepers said, that he had come about me. He was removed directly afterwards. He was a foreigner, from his appearance."

"And Philip Reynell took a foreign servant at Malta," Mr. Hastings said, half to himself. "It is a tangled skein, Edwards, but we will help you to unwind it. What makes you attempt your escape now?"

"Seeing Miss Kate, sir—I beg her pardon, Mrs. Hastings."

"Oh, never mind—Miss Kate will do."

"I know she would help me, sir, I know you did try, and they were going to move me again. I heard them talking about it. I was to be sent to Scotland to-day."

"They'll be pleased to take you from my house. There's nothing in this matter that needs the eye. I must take counsel with a friend of mine who knows all the circumstances of your master's return."

"Harry, if it should be as I fancy—if my hurried thought should be true, Katherine, you will not be the one to denounce him."

"I will never forget that my wife once called him friend," he replied. "Have no fear."

The door bell rang loudly, and Edwards, pale as death, started from his seat.

"Oh, save me, sir!" he said. "They are coming to take me away."

"They shall not have you," was the quiet reply, as a servant, entering the room, announced that the resident doctor of the asylum wished to speak to his master immediately.

Mr. Hastings received the doctor with all possible respect, and, after a brief consultation with the usual and good, poor Edwards trembling while with terrible apprehension in Katherine's pretty sitting-room.

"The man you were inquiring about has escaped," the doctor said. "I fancy he will make for your house, Mr. Hastings."

"Why so?"

"Because he was aware of Mrs. Hastings' interest in him. His malady is of the cunning and calculating kind, and he would count on eliciting her sympathy, if she knew him."

"Then may I ask you to do your utmost to detain him, to use force, if necessary to do so, till you can communicate with me? I have the most strict injunctions from his friends not to permit him to see or speak with any one outside the asylum."

"I have no doubt of it. Such patients as he are very inconvenient people to be at large."

"I do not understand you."

"Perhaps not. Do you know anything of this man's antecedents?"

"Nothing at all; and nothing of the people who placed him under your care?"

"No, they are country people, and pay regularly."

"He came to you from another asylum—Doctor Brash's, I fancy, House, Breconshire. You see I know a little about him, Mr. Hastings."

"I can see how, I cannot think."

"I know all but one thing. How long has he been with you?"

"Since January of last year."

"And this is May—sixteen months? When did you miss him?"

"Not an hour before I came out. The men are scouring the country in all directions in search of him."

"They may spare themselves the trouble. He is here."

"Here?"

"In your house! And you have detained him? I am deeply indebted to you, Mr. Hastings."

"Not so fast, Mr. Saxon. I have not detained him for you."

"I do not quite understand you. He is not fit to be at large. I will take him back with me. I don't want no assistance—he is perfectly quiet."

"Quiet! He is perfectly sane."

"Mr. Saxon laughed slightly, and shrugged his shoulders."

"He appears so, and, except on the subject of his delusion, he certainly is."

"And his delusion is that he is one Edwards, not Mr. Philip Reynell, of Boscobel Abbey?"

"That is part of it."

"My wife can vouch for the truth of all he has said regarding his position. There is some reason, not apparent on the surface, for keeping him out of the way. I will keep him here for the present, until I have investigated it thoroughly."

"Pardon me; you cannot do that. He is under my charge—placed there by parties who are responsible for his safe keeping. You cannot detain him, Mr. Hastings. The law will compel you to give him up."

"Hardly, I think we shall see. I shall get him out of my hands, and I shall prove that the people who placed him here have a right to control his actions. I will be answerable for his safety. He will not run away from us."

Mr. Saxon was puzzled how to act. Mr. Hastings was a magistrate, and a man of influence in the county, and to enter his house, and take therefrom a man for whom he was himself responsible, by the strong arm of the law, was a proceeding likely to bring anything but credit on the well-regulated establishment to which he belonged.

Just at that time there had been an escape of two or three cases of fugitive insanity on the part of asylum proprietors, and the press and the public were taking the matter up sharply. It would not do to have attention directed too strongly to them.

"I believe, as truly as that I am sitting here, that Edwards—for that is his name, Mr. Saxon—has been kept hidden because there is some tremendous conspiracy going on which his presence would harm. Will you hear his story from his own lips? There is truth on the face of it in every line."

Mr. Saxon was hardly prepared to see the quiet, respectfully-dressed, well-mannered person whom Mr. Hastings brought to him. He had actually seen very little of the patient. The case was attended to as an ordinary one in the usual routine of business, and, save as a quiet fellow who gave little trouble, he was hardly noticed. He was paid for regularly, and very little was thought of him. Mr. Saxon did not tell Mr. Hastings that he had written to his patient's supposed friends, inform-

ing them of the efforts Katherine was making to get him out. The knowledge of their answer had been the immediate cause of his escape. They had written to order his immediate removal to a branch asylum under another name, and had forwarded the necessary money.

Edwards told his story over again when he had recovered somewhat from his terror, and Mr. Saxon listened with no small interest, making a note now and then as the tale went on. He was a little startled at hearing that his patient had no brother.

"But I am in correspondence with him," he said. "Mr. Jones, of Aberdorey."

"I've no brother, sir," he said; "never had one. I've a sister, if she isn't dead. I have not seen her since I was quite a lad, and went for a soldier. I've never been able to get a letter sent to her—I've been so watched."

"Where is she to be found?"

"At Clyro Court Farm, sir—Mrs. Mayhew. I'm not sure whether it's Breconshire or Radnorshire—it's so close upon the boundary line."

"We will write to her," Mr. Hastings said. "Now, Mr. Saxon, a word with you."

He desired Edwards to return to the room where he had left Katherine, and assured him once more of his perfect safety.

"Look here, my dear," said Mrs. Sloper to Mrs. Saxon, looking up from her book with the tears in her eyes, "who is 'Him'?"

"I can't think. I read a book of his that came out by the last mail, 'In the shadow of the Flag.' It must be the Springers he was in."

"I don't think it's a man," Mrs. Sloper said; "it's a story here of a corporal's life."

"There's been no woman of course, in my time, capable of doing such a thing, except Kate Branscombe. Poor Kate! I wonder what has become of her?"

"Oh, she's with her friends, of course! I wonder if she'll see Philip Reynell when we get home? I shall give him a piece of my mind if I ever do meet him."

Mrs. Sloper was to the full as indignant as her friend at Philip Reynell's conduct to Katherine, and she rather looked to meeting him and putting him to shame by a few stinging words regarding his conduct to her daughter-in-law.

Her son had not married well; he had grown reckless, and plunged headlong into the most careless of the society by which he was surrounded, and his mother was very fond of saying that if he had married the colonel's daughter he would have been a different man. She looked upon Philip Reynell as the marplot who had spoiled all her arrangements, and longed for some way of "serving him out," as she expressed it.

She was a little sore with Katherine, too; she thought that she might have written to her old friends, and she set her down as "stuck up" because of her silence.

The news of Mr. Underwood's death reached India due course; but those of the ladies who knew he was the uncle to whom the orphan girl had gone, had no idea but what her fortune was still safe, and that she was still living in affluence somewhere in England.

The regiment had left Allahabad, and was stationed at Gwalior, in Central India, from which uncomfortable station they expected to be sent home. The two ladies shared the same bungalow now, or, rather, their bungalows joined—and, neither of them having any children, they were much together. They joined in their library annotations, their papers, and the amusements which were got up to while away the weary hours of their Indian life. They were much better friends than of yore; but the news of the death of the colonel, and the news of the birth of a son to the Reynell name, had dropped off, and they were almost alone.

Mrs. Saxon dived deep into the case of books which the bearer had opened, and took up a volume of the one her friend was already deep in.

"Blessed fortune!" she read, by "Smile. Have you the first?"

Mrs. Sloper nodded. She was far too absorbed in her book to talk, and her tears were falling over it.

Mrs. Saxon did not wait for her friend to finish the first volume, but took the second, and encased herself under the veranda. Suddenly she uttered an exclamation.

"What is it?" asked her friend.

"Either Katherine Branscombe or Philip Reynell wrote this story! Here is the tale of the colonel's death, and what we were doing on that Christmas Day, all told in such a pretty way; and here's another chapter about the voyage home, and all that. It must be Katherine; but whatever could have made her turn author?"

"Compton & Co., Paternoster-row," Mrs. Sloper read from the title-page of her volume. "We shall soon find out from them who 'Smile' is."

The long-expected orders for home came on the 24th very late in the year. They were en route during all the events of the last few chapters; but the news of the birth of an heir to the Reynell name and fortunes had reached India before the regiment started.

Mrs. Armadale, a cheery, bright little woman, who loved to have her house full of company, welcomed her brother and his friend with effusion, and told him with glees that Harbledown would be crammed.

"We shall have room to put a mouse," she said, excitedly. "Arnold gave me carte blanche. Who do you think is coming, Bertie?"

"Couldn't guess, sister dear. The Khan of Tartary, perhaps—it wouldn't be an impossibility if you took it into your wise little head."

"Don't laugh at me, Bertie—it is a friend of mine."

"Of mine, eh?"

"Yes; Mr. Reynell, that you used to make such a fuss about. Arnold and I met them in Paris—I like his wife so much! Why, how you look, just as if you didn't like it."

"I'm afraid my friend won't."

"What friend?"

"Mrs. Hastings."

"Why?"

"Only because she is the lady who came ten thousand miles to marry him, and found him false—that's all. I'm afraid the meeting won't be a very pleasant one."

"What shall we do?"

tonished at the story Philip Reynell's husband had told him, would be so feebly to express what he felt.

"Something wrong?" he exclaimed.

"Something damnable! Do you think that the secret of his life is murder, and that he murdered that poor devil of a servant of his?"

The Recording Angel, who bids on the record of human souls with tears, had usually a good many to weep over Major Scoby's fallings in that respect; but in this instance he might be excused if the tears did not fall, the explosion was so natural, and perforce, and never written down at all.

"I can't imagine. The idea entered my wife's head, and made her feel quite ill. I cannot see the motive for such an act."

"Nor I, unless the poor fellow had held of some shameful secret of his; and yet I could have sworn that if ever man had led a pure life, without any shameful past in it, it was my old friend Reynell. Now we can be deceived to be sure!"

The entrance of the ladies put a stop to their conversation for the time, but Mr. Hastings felt that they had secured an important ally in Major Scoby, to assist them in finding out the secret of Philip Reynell's life.

CHAPTER XXX.

AT LAST.

Love, hope, and joy alike edify:
Would I could add remembrance too. —Byron.

The Simla was all in confusion when the party went on board, but they were most courteously received, and Major Scoby was in his glory showing his friends over her. He had a hobby—the improvement of the army transports—and he pointed out every appliance for cleanliness and order, every mode of averting danger and saving life with the air of a divorcee exhibiting a public building.

"We've had many a bit of fun here," Mrs. Scoby said, as they sat down in the saloon over a glass of champagne. "I remember. We used to have games of an evening, and dance. Several of our gentlemen were married, and we got up some very pretty concertos. Bless me, major, what's the matter?" for the major had started up in a tremendous hurry, upsetting his glass into his wife's lap. "There's a news! What a tremendous man you are!"

"I beg your pardon, my dear," looking ruefully at the stream of wine. "It's only some one I want to speak to. 'Keep your wife here, Mr. Hastings,' he added, in a whisper. 'It's Reynell!'"

He bustled out, followed by his wife, who had no idea of letting the major go anywhere within her cognizance without her. Philip Reynell did not seem particularly well pleased at meeting the major again.

"I had no idea you were here," he said. "We were just going ashore."

"Without speaking to me, Philip Reynell?" Mrs. Scoby asked. "Have you forgotten all your old friends?"

"I could never forget you," he said, with emphasis. "I had no idea you were on board."

He shook hands with her; but the nervousness her husband had spoken of, was very apparent.

"I have just been talking to Captain Sloper," he said. "He hardly knew me. He says Mrs. Sloper is here."

"Yes, and another old friend of yours. Perhaps you'd like to see her?"

"Who?"

"Kate Branscombe."

"However heartless he had been in his conduct to Kate, the mention of her name affected him painfully. He turned aside pale and clutched the hand rail of the steps he was standing on, as though the words had made him faint and sick."

"No, I do not want to see her," he said; "that is, I don't suppose she wants to see me."

"No, I should not think she did," Mrs. Scoby replied. "Are you not ashamed of yourself, Philip Reynell? You broke her heart."

"It has been repaid since," he said, with a sneer, so foreign to what she remembered of him that she started aghast at the change it produced in his handsome face. "Mrs. Hastings is quoted as a very happy wife."

"And if she is, it is no thanks to you. You ought to be ashamed of what you have done. Poor Kate! she loved you dearly once."

"I am ashamed, madam—as much as a man can be. All the remorse that man can feel I have felt over that unfortunate affair. We are not masters of ourselves sometimes, and as I told the major here, my wife's love and beauty must plead for me. As it happened, it has turned out for the best. In Mr. Hastings Miss Branscombe has found a much more suitable husband than I should have made her. Maybe she has been spared much sorrow—how do you know?"

"I dare say she has," Mrs. Scoby said, grimly; and Philip and his friend hurried off, just as the rest of the party emerged from the saloon.

"Who do you think it was?" the major's wife asked of Kate, as they stood a little apart from the rest of the party, waiting to go ashore.

"I don't know. Who?"

"Philip Reynell."

"He—here?"

"Yes, my dear, here, on board this ship. Ah! I'm sorry I told you—you look quite faint."

"Will you go ill?" returned Katherine, slowly, "but I hope the Fates will keep us apart. Don't fancy I have a single feeling for him now except contempt. It was the memory of the dear old times in India brought these tears—not of him and his pretended love."

She was her own calm self again by the time her husband joined her, and able to tell him, without a tremor in her voice, how near she had been to meeting Philip Reynell.

"I am glad you didn't, dear," was all the reply he made, feeling inwardly as though he should very much like to meet Mr. Reynell and break his neck if occasion offered.

The friends parted at Portsmouth with many promises of meeting again soon. The regiment went off to Aldershot, and Katherine and her husband started for Hildesheim, which was as pretty a country seat as could be found in all pretty Warwickshire.

Mrs. Armdale received them with a hearty welcome. Her husband was there to introduce them, and she flattered about having a real live aristocrat under her roof, and of being able to tell all her bosom friends what a delightful creature "Simla" was.

She was a petite woman, with flowing tresses of lace and ribbon, and fastidious brown curls, surrounded by a morsel of lace and ribbon which she called a cap. The prevailing color about her was pink, and she looked as fresh and as pretty as a wild hedge-rose just beginning to open in such countless profusion in the Warwickshire lanes and meadows. Katherine felt at home with her directly when she was introduced in a pretty bedroom, with a balcony opening on the lawn, and the suggestion of boarders attached to it. Everything about her breathed of the purity and freshness which seemed to hang over the great little mistress of the house—for Mrs. Armdale did "gush," in spite of her thirty-

two years, though it was in a womanly, warm way, that no one could take exception to.

There was an hour before the dressing-bell would ring, and she bestowed it all upon her new acquaintances, telling her what they were going to do in the way of amusement.

The dinner-bell of the conversation Mr. Hastings came in, and Mrs. Armdale being called away, remained a short time discussing with her wife a circumstance which had just occurred, which caused them no small amount of wonderment, and of which she shall have more to say hereafter. The time slipped away till they heard the voice of their hostess.

"The dinner-bell will ring in a minute, good people," she said, putting in her head and part of her little body, gorgeously got up in pale blue satin. "Are you dressed, Mrs. Hastings?"

"I am not," said her husband, beating a retreat. "I feel very guilty. I have been gossiping with my wife."

Mrs. Armdale was obliged to run away too, after informing Katherine, much to her surprise, though she said nothing, that the Reynolds were expected on the same day.

The dinner, like all other dinners, came and passed, and after it was over the ladies had retired to the drawing-room, the sound of approaching wheels announced a visitor.

"It is the Reynolds," Mrs. Armdale said. "You don't know her, do you, Mrs. Hastings?"

"No," replied Katherine.

She could hardly bring her dry lips to form the little word, and, making some excuse, she left the room. She had said that she could meet her faithless lover calmly—he was nothing to her now—she cared nothing for him or her movements; but now, that the moment of meeting had come, a rush of old memories made her eyes dim and her lips quiver with an agitation she could not repress.

"They all know my story," she said to herself. "I must meet him calmly, or not at all."

And she stole to her own room, to have one minute to herself, for the traces of wounded pride, of bitter retrospection, that would come in spite of her judgment. There was no one there, and she drew aside the window curtains, and watched the arrival. She saw a figure in a light overcoat, the reins of a pair of bays to the groom in attendance, and hand down a lady upon whose fair face and waving hair the light of the hall lamp shone full and clear. Katherine's lip curled with a touch of scorn.

"He could turn from me to her!" she said, bitterly; and, indeed, poor (wounded) pride, weary-looking face, when she was just about to strike at her journey, she had not seen her face yet, but as she thought flashed through her mind, she looked straight up to where she sat, little dreaming that the woman she had wronged was within earshot of his voice.

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At my side stood Richmond Pearson, whispering pretty compliments and sweet speeches to me, but I was tired of his flattery, and wishing to rid myself of him, I asked him to get me a glass of water. He bowed low, murmured something about the honor and pleasure of waiting on me, and left me to perform my best.

The room was warm, and I turned to the open window. The piazza was filled with promenaders; on the steps and the pretty rustic porch-chairs couples were seated, and flirting and fun seemed the order of the evening.

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There was a moment's silence, and then the man spoke.

"Miss Belle, what perfect hands Miss Thurston would have but for the huge, ugly wart on the left one, which so completely disfigures it."

"Of all things, I admire a beautiful hand; and I have often said to myself, how never ask a woman to marry me whose hands were not truly pretty. Like yours, for instance, Miss Belle. And then followed a few words I did not catch, and I think, or perhaps I fancied, I heard a kiss imparted on one of the hands so much admired."

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It was not hard work; he, evidently, had spent much time in ladies' society, and knew well how to please them.

That night, as I fell asleep, I determined more positively than ever that Willie Potter should address me, and should receive from me a decided answer in the negative.

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And so the days went on, and forgetful of the risk to myself, I rode, walked, talked and laughed with Mr. Potter, till such day grew brighter than the preceding one, and my life seemed one long ray of sunshine.

But it could not last. One night, as we were seated on the piazza alone, Willie told me of his love. How the words thrilled me, and how I wished to confess that my heart was his in return! But the moment I had longed for was here, and now it would never do for me to falter in my refusal.

Indeed, Mr. Potter, how can you address a young lady whose hands are not 'truly pretty?' Have I not heard you say you would never ask a woman to marry you, who had not a perfect hand; and a hand, you know, with a 'huge wart' on it, can never be pretty? Belle Hinton's, for instance, would suit you better," and I paused to see the effect of my words.

"Nellie, my darling," he murmured, "you know I do not care for Belle Hinton; and this precious hand, with its ugly wart, is dearer far to me and more beautiful than any in the world. Nellie, say that I may call you my own; and let me prove, by a life of devotion, the love I feel for you."

"No, Mr. Potter," I answered, "I must never be!"

How cold my voice sounded, but how my heart beat! Would he take this for a final decision, or would he plead on? Ah! what a moment of meeting had come, and how easily he repulsed; and ere long I felt I must give way, unless he left me.

"Nellie," he whispered, "you love me—I have seen it, darling, and the knowledge has made me happier than words can express. Why should I not tell you, and by refusing the hand I beg for? Say, my precious one, that you will be mine."

It was hard to resist him; but I answered: "No, no, I won't be yours—I can't be yours till this hateful wart is gone! I overheard you say you would never marry a woman whose hand was not pretty—and while this wart is here, mine cannot be so. I vowed I would make you address me, make you beg for my hand, wart and all—and I have done so; but I vowed, too, that I would refuse you."

"Foolish girl," he said bitterly, as he pushed me from him. "I thought I loved a noble, true-hearted woman, and now I find my ideal a child. A silly child, too, who wins a man's love and then throws it away because he does not think her hand as pretty as she wishes, and because she has lost the reins of a pair of bays to the groom in attendance, and hand down a lady upon whose fair face and waving hair the light of the hall lamp shone full and clear. Katherine's lip curled with a touch of scorn."

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myself to speak, and the next instant he was beside me. I had read the old tale of love in his eyes, and that reading had brought me infinite happiness.

"Nellie," he said, gently, "you were seated before me in the train this afternoon, and I saw your left hand. Darling, is not the wart gone?"

"Yes, Willie," I whispered.

"And the hand?" he asked.

"It is yours now, Willie; now and forever."

"Ah, reader, the happiness of that moment seemed to make up for all I had suffered!"

"And she is not your wife," I said after awhile.

"No, darling," he answered, drawing me closer to him, "only a cousin, and I expect she wonders what important business has kept me so long at the depot. You see when I recognized you, my precious one, I could not give you up again."

"Oh, Willie," I murmured, "if you only knew what I have gone through, the pain my silly pride has caused me, you would feel sorry for me."

"And I too have suffered," he answered.

"But, darling one, the 'ugly wart' is gone, and with it all our unhappiness!"

A PUZZLE FOR PHILOSOPHERS.

Mr. Darwin and other scientific men who have adapted his theory of the origin of species, have given very plausible explanations of various physical peculiarities of men and animals. Thus the white color of the Polar bear, and the green hue of certain butterflies, are intelligently accounted for upon the theory of "the survival of the fittest." There are, however, a number of phenomena which are yet wholly without explanation, and to which Mr. Darwin's attention might profitably be turned. Among these is the problem why the W. H. Johnsons, of New England, should be characterized by glass eyes?

The existence of this curious phenomenon was very recently brought to light by certain detective police officers of Boston. These officers were dispatched throughout New England in search of one W. H. Johnson, a man whose acquaintance the authorities of Boston desired to make, and whose distinguishing feature was a glass eye—indeed, an artificial eye is entitled to be called a feature. It will hardly be credited that the detectives actually met no less than four different men, each of whom bore the name of W. H. Johnson, and each of whom possessed a glass eye. Moreover, each of these Johnsons was the particular Johnson for whom they were searching; neither was a fifth W. H. Johnson, also with a glass eye, of whose existence they learned, but whom they did not actually meet—the Johnson in demand. Now, here are five men, each bearing the same name, and each added to glass eyes. Surely we have sufficient data for assuming that in New England, if not elsewhere, that species of the human race known as "W. H. Johnson" is distinguished by the invariable characteristic of a glass eye.

To account for this curious fact is a task which is obvious that scientific persons alone are competent to undertake. Probably Mr. Darwin would explain it by his pet hypothesis of the survival of the fittest. He would assume that certain natural laws gradually brought about the extinction of W. H. Johnsons with normal eyes, and that inasmuch as those cases do not affect W. H. Johnsons with glass eyes, the latter have survived to be the only representatives of the W. H. Johnson species. This would be an entirely satisfactory explanation, did it include a statement of the particular causes that have led to this result. The unscientific mind finds it impossible to conjecture what could have been the precise natural laws which were hostile to the existence of the naturally-eyed W. H. Johnsons; and it is greatly to be feared that even were Mr. Darwin himself to undertake to define them, his definition would be purely conjectural, and hence eminently inconclusive. Still, the problem, difficult as it seems to be, is one which ought to command the attention of every fearless scientific investigator. The Boston detectives in collecting five specimens of glass-eyed W. H. Johnsons have done a service to science. The obvious generalization that all New England W. H. Johnsons are glass-eyed, has already forced itself upon every thoughtful mind. It remains for scientific persons to grapple with these facts, and to find their true and only explanation.

PARENTS are protesting against the custom of keeping children after school hours as a punishment for failure in lessons. It certainly must be well understood, in this age of the world, that the physical welfare of a child is as important as the mental progress. Long continued confinement and protracted mental strain are highly injurious. How is a child who is subjected to extra confinement and extra hours of study in the school room, to be prepared for fresh, vigorous attention to lessons the next day?

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"A man and a father named Smith, recently traded five children for a saw-mill, but his heart failed him the next day, especially when he found the saw needed flint, and he insisted on having one child or eight dollars returned to him to comfort him in his old age. We are happy to state Mrs. Smith died last year."—St. Louis Democrat.

"Bill Jones, of Milwaukee, held a gentleman's coat for him so long that the police magistrate was obliged to hold him in \$200 bail."

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